

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 071212Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8002

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 156

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR LUCIEN DAHDAH ON PRESENT POLITICAL
SITUATION

REF BEIRUT 15637

SUMMARY: IN FOLLOW UP MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL
ADVISOR LUCIEN DAHDAH, ECON COUNSELOR WAS INFORMED THAT
CHRISTIAN POSITION HAD INDEED HARDENED. MOREOVER NEGOTIATIONS
BETWEEN SIDES ARE AT STANDSTILL, WITH FRANGIE WAITING FOR A LIST
OF PROPOSALS WHICH KARAME CANNOT GIVE BECAUSE OF INABILITY TO
OBTAIN NECESSARY CLEARANCES. DAHDAH BUSILY WORKING ON SCHEME
TO GET THINGS MOVING AGAIN. CHRISTIANS REMAIN UNWILLING TO AC-
CEPT AGREEMENT GUARANTEED BY SYRIANS ALONE BUT WOULD ACCEPT
POLICE FORCE COMPOSED OF SYRIANS, KUWAITIS AND SAUDIS. UN-
FORTUNATELY HOWEVER SYRIANS AT PRESENT OPPOSED TO THIS. HARD
LINE CHRISTIAN POSITION APPARENTLY CONSIDERED BEST TACTIC.
CHRISTIANS AWARE THAT NO WESTERN COUNTRY BACKS THEM.
DAHDAH INFORMED THAT SUPPORT OF VARIOUS POSITIONS DEPENDS
ON REASONABLENESS OF THESE POSITIONS. APPOINTMENT AR-
RANGED FOR AMBASSADOR TO SEE FRANGIE. END SUMMARY.

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1. ON JAN 5 ECON COUNSELOR HAD OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF DEC 28 (SEE REFTTEL) WITH PRES FRANGIE'S CONFIDANT LUCIEN DAHDAH.

2. REPLYING TO QUESTION AS TO WHAT HAD GONE WRONG BETWEEN THE TIME OF THE TWO DISCUSSIONS, DAHDAH CONCEDED THAT THE CHRISTIAN POSITION HAD HARDENED IN THE INTERIM. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS HOWEVER TO THE CHRISTIAN FEELING OF A SENSE OF ABANDONMENT AND FEAR OF THE INCREASED PALESTINIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANESE AFFAIRS. WHEN IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT THE RECENT VISIT OF THE IRAQI (CHRISTIAN) MINISTER OF INFORMATION MIGHT HAVE PLAYED A ROLE, DAHDAH DENIED THIS CATEGORICALLY, CLAIMING IRAQI MISSION PURELY OF FACT FINDING NATURE.

3. DAHDAH STATED THAT THE DIALOGUE ON SETTLING LEBANESE CRISIS HAD REACHED A STANDSTILL. FRANGIE WAS AWAITING PROPOSALS FROM KARAME WHICH LATER COULD NOT PRODUCE AS HE WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN NECESSARY CLEARANCES. FRANGIE ON OTHER HAND CONSIDERED HE COULD NOT ACT ON PROPOSALS THAT UP TO NOW WERE STRICTLY SYRIAN AND THUS FOREIGN. THROUGH MOSLEM INTERMEDIARIES DAHDAH WAS DESPERATELY TRYING TO HAVE KARAME SIMPLY PRESENT FRANGIE WITH A LIST OF PROBLEMS WITHOUT MENTIONING SOLUTIONS. IN SUCH A MANNER IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO GET THE DIALOGUE MOVING AGAIN. HE EVEN SOLICITED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE EMBASSY IN APPROACHING KARAME ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED.

4. REITERATING CHRISTIAN UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A SYRIAN GUARANTEE ALONE, HE ADDED THAT THE CHRISTIANS WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A SYRIAN-ARAB LEAGUE GUARANTEE, BUT THE SYRIANS UNFORTUNATELY WERE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THIS. ASSUMING SOME SORT OF EXTERNAL POLICE FORCE WAS NECESSARY AT LEAST IN THE BEGINNING TO SECURE ANY AGREEMENT, HE THOUGHT THAT THE SYRIANS MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT AN ARAB LEAGUE FORCE LIMITED TO SYRIAN, KUWAITI, AND SAUDI PARTICIPATION, WHICH STILL COULD BE CALLED A SYRIAN-ARAB LEAGUE FORCE. HE ADDED THAT, IN LIGHT OF THE CORDIAL US RELATIONS WITH SYRIA, THE US MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN CONVINCING THE SYRIANS OF THIS AND AT THE SAME TIME ALLAYING POSSIBLE ISRAELI APPREHENSIONS.

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5. DAHDAH DEFENDED THE HARD LINE CHRISTIAN POSITION, APPARENTLY ASSUMING THIS THE BEST TACTIC. HE FULLY SUPPORTED RELIGIOUS ORDER LEADER KASSIS REGARDING MILITARY TRAINING OF MONKS AND CLAIMED CENSUS THAT INCLUDED EMIGRES WOULD ONLY INCREASE ELECTORAL ROLLS BY 15 PERCENT. HE WAS CRITICAL OF THE US POSITION ON LEBANON BUT CONCEDED THAT NO WESTERN COUNTRY SUPPORTED THE PRESENT CHRISTIAN POSITION. (AT THIS POINT IT WAS NOTED THAT WESTERN SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN POSI-

TION DEPENDED ON THE CONTENT OF THIS POSITION. THE
MORE RESPONSIBLE THE POSITION, THE MORE THE POSITION
WOULD RECEIVE SUPPORT.)

6. NOTING THE ADVISABILITY OF CONTINUING CONTACT BETWEEN
PRES FRANGIE AND THE AMBASSADOR, DAHDAH SUGGESTED THAT
THE RECENT DECISION OF THE GOL TO ASSIST THE AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT COULD SERVE AS AN OCCASION FOR A CALL
BY THE AMBASSADOR ON THE PRESIDENT. THE AMBASSADOR
COULD EXPRESS APPRECIATION AND THEN GO ON TO A
DISCUSSION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION. (AN APPOINTMENT
HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE FOR JAN 8.)
GODLEY

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